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SENSITIVE
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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [KPKO](#) [UNSC](#) [LE](#)
SUBJECT: UNIFIL: DPKO EMPHASIZES DIMINISHING LAF
CAPABILITIES

REF: USUN 616

11. (SBU) POL officers met with Wolfgang Weisbrod-Weber, DPKO Asia and Middle East division director, on July 21 to discuss issues related to the implementation of UNSCR 1701. Weisbrod-Weber said he wanted to reiterate the "very strong statements" he made during the July 9 Security Council consultations (reftel) regarding the redeployment of a large number of Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) troops out of UNIFIL's area of operations south of the Litani River. (Note: A transcript of his remarks were e-mailed to IO/UNP. End Note.) He stressed that DPKO and UNIFIL were concerned about diminishing LAF capabilities in UNIFIL's AOR, noting that UNIFIL's main mission is to support the LAF, which is difficult to achieve when the LAF is overstretched and under pressure to fulfill competing security responsibilities.

12. (SBU) Weisbrod-Weber said that out of approximately 400 total daily patrols, only around 20 are conducted jointly. He emphasized that UNIFIL has had to reduce the number of joint counter rocket-launching operations to six from a planned ten per day. DPKO estimates that there are currently fewer than 5,000 LAF troops in UNIFIL's AOR, down from a starting size of roughly 9,000. The original assumption, Weisbrod-Weber said, was that the LAF would supply 12,000-15,000 troops. Weisbrod-Weber wanted to see what member states, including the USG, could do to support and augment LAF capabilities. He also asked that member states impress upon the Lebanese government the need to maintain its commitment to the LAF deployment south of the Litani. (Note: POL officers subsequently raised Weisbrod-Weber's concerns with Lebanese DPR Caroline Ziade, who said she would refer the issue to Beirut. End Note.)
Khalilzad